GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3984
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2016
Visa to PIOs
Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to extend lifelong visas to the People of Indian Origin (PIOs) to visit their homeland;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of PIOs likely to be benefited under the scheme;

(c) the time by which the above proposal is likely to be implemented;

(d) the estimated number of PIOs and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards issued so far;

(e) whether the Government has any proposal to merge both PIO and OCI cards; and

(f) if so, the details along with the features of the new scheme and the time by which the above proposal is likely to be implemented?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (c) A person fulfilling the eligibility conditions as prescribed in Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 can apply for registration as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder. OCI card is a multiple entry lifelong visa for visiting India for any purpose (except for research work for which they would require special permission). An OCI cardholder is exempted from registration with FRRO/FRO for any length of stay in India, and is entitled to parity with Non-Resident Indians in respect of all facilities available to them in economic, financial and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties and the right to vote or take up constitutional or public posts.

(d) to (f) Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) card and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card schemes have been merged with effect from January 09, 2015. As per information available, 22,50,550 OCI cards have been issued as on August 04, 2016. Further, 1,73,200 OCI cards have been issued in lieu of PIO cards as on August 04, 2016.